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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is the topic of this chapter from "Six Crucial Issues in Education." The Foreword and introduction to the book are provided. The following areas are discussed in this chapter: (1) Research--Bloom, Hunt's "Intelligence and Experience," Piaget; (2) Head Start and Other Compensatory Programs; (3) Public Attention to Education; (4) Day-Care Services--current controversy, rationale; (5) Infants and Parents--research on parents as teachers, projects to improve parents' teaching skills, Parent Child Centers; (6) Developmental Nursery Schools--what happens in nursery school, the Montessori schools; (7) Follow-Through Models; (8) Teaching School-Related Skills--academically oriented approach, behavioral analysis model; (9) Changing the School--Educational Development Center approach, Responsive Environment and Tucson Early Education Follow Through models; (10) Fostering Normal Development--Bank Street approach, cognitively oriented program; and (11) Planning Considerations--Increased Options, Parent Involvement, Quality Control, Staff Preparation (education), Administrative Responsibility, Value Judgements. A bibliography and list of additional sources are provided. (KM)

CARE AND EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG CHILD

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FOREWORD

An increasingly important objective of the National Association of State Boards of Education is to provide means and opportunities for members of state boards of education to study and discuss relevant and timely educational and related social problems of mutual interest. This is essential to strengthen individual board members, thereby better preparing them to discharge official duties in education in our states and territories. To this end, it is vital that state board members have opportunities to hear or read the ideas of expert specialists in current educational public policy as a basis for discussing their concerns, and exchanging information about differing practices with friends and colleagues in other states and territories. This objective is largely met during the area conferences held in the spring of each year, one in each of the four regions into which the 55 NASBE member states and territories are divided: Northeastern, Southern, Central, and Western.

The six topics in this volume were those considered and discussed at each of the 1972 Area Conferences. Obviously, other crucial matters face board members and educators; but all six topics as selected seemed relevant while planning our 1971-72 year. It is important for the reader to know that the services of the six expert specialists and reproducing and forwarding their texts to registrants before presentation at each area conference, as well as preparation, printing and distribution of this book, were made possible by a Title V grant (Public Law 89-10) from the United States Office of Education. After authorization by your board of directors, the undersigned solicited and negotiated the grant based upon NASBE's continued belief, shared by USOE, that adding to the information base of state board members enhances their decision-making ability, thereby resulting in strong boards along with better state departments of education. This book has been printed and distributed to all members and many friends of NASBE so that even those unable to attend the area conference or the annual convention can benefit from this USOE grant.

Note is taken of the immense task very ably performed by our executive secretary, Dr. David T. Tronsgard. We must all be grateful for his steady pressure on the six expert presentors (authors) from the moment of their selection, right through the four area conferences and subsequent editorial processes, which includes getting your president to meet the deadline of this Foreword. The efforts by Dr. Gregory R. Anrig as a coordinator for this volume in preparation for further discussions at the NASBE 1972 Annual Convention next month are greatly appreciated. NASBE is grateful also for the time and effort devoted by the education authorities of Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, which states were "participating" parties in the project as well as hosts for the 1972 area conferences; and great personal as well as official gratitude goes to New York for acting as the "administering state" for the project grant. Colorado also helped with financial arrangements. Special mention must be made of Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr., U.S. Commissioner of Education, and many members of his staff, in particular Charles B. Saunders, Jr., Wayne O. Reed, James E. Gibbs and Harry L.

Phillips, without whose continuing support and warm interest in NASBE this volume would not have been possible.

The most important purpose of this Foreword is to thank not only the six authors represented in this volume, but also those members of NASBE who attended the 1972 area conferences. Both groups contributed mightily to the lively pace maintained at each gathering. At each conference, the authors presented their essays, not as being final or definitive, but rather as a basis for full discussion from the floor by NASBE members, and the reader must so treat them also. This volume represents a tribute to the liveliness with which the presentations were made and to the equally spirited debate and discussions between NASBE members which ensued on all four occasions. It was a pleasant privilege indeed to listen to the presentations and discussions four times, and on each occasion the NASBE members' participation was lively, intense and extremely interesting. It is in the spirit of accomplishing one of NASBE's prime objectives that I take great pride in presenting this book on behalf of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Carl H. Pforzheimer, Jr.
President
New York, September 1972

INTRODUCTION

Time to think and time to plan. Time away from the crises of today so as to ponder the needs of tomorrow. That is the commodity so scarce for members of state boards of education. But even when the rare moment arises for a state board member to look ahead, the range of complex issues is so great that it is difficult to focus one's thoughts productively.

It was partially for this reason that the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) initiated the preparation of the papers contained in this publication. The papers spotlight six educational issues of importance to state boards of education across the country.

The papers are designed to provoke thought and discussion. This is their second purpose. NASBE members at regional conferences during 1971-1972 have vigorously debated the issues raised in these papers with each other and with the authors. In many ways, the debates have been as valuable and informative as the papers themselves. NASBE, with the support of the U.S. Office of Education, has now published the papers so that the debates can continue not only among NASBE members but among all those interested in education throughout each of our states.

It should be understood that the papers do not represent official positions of the National Association of State Boards of Education. They represent the views of their authors on issues of importance to NASBE members. Their purpose is not to prescribe answers but to promote thinking, raise issues and stimulate discussion.

Towards these ends, the six papers have been organized into two sections. One deals with Issues of Policy and Governance, the other with Issues of Curricula. The former focuses on how education should be governed at the state level. The latter focuses on three needs for improving the educational opportunities of children, needs about which NASBE members will undoubtedly be making decisions in the future. It is the hope of NASBE that its members will find themselves better informed and better prepared as a result of this publication.

Since many readers of this publication will not be members of state boards of education, let me attempt to describe briefly the role of state leadership in education needed for the 1970's as I see it.

I believe a series of events are creating a new opportunity and demand for stronger state leadership in education. Decisions of courts on matters ranging from school finance to district lines, the probability of some national legislation increasing federal funds available to states and freeing state funds committed to welfare, a growing consensus favoring full-state funding of education, the growing complexity of problems facing local officials who feel helpless to cope with them, governors and legislators coming on the scene who are more enlightened about education as a matter of political reality, and an increasing although begrudging recognition that past assumptions about local autonomy and federal infallability have to be critically reexamined - all of these (and others) create a need and an opportunity for improved state leadership in education.

I believe the expanding state role in education includes the following areas of responsibility:

Leadership

* Planning and Development – looking ahead, identifying problems, setting priorities, testing alternative solutions so that available funds can be managed rationally and legislative and administrative initiatives can have an intelligent basis.
* Evaluation - devising ways (and better using those already available) to increase

information for decision-making at all levels and to give some sense of progress, or the lack of it, which can be presented frankly to the public.

* Legislative and Administrative Initiative – rational identification and documentation of education needs, realistic proposals for legislative and/or administrative remedies, and the mustering of public involvement for devising and supporting these remedies.
* Consultative and Mediation Services – providing to local school districts (and other agencies affecting children) technical assistance which addresses very real local problems and aids in the implementation of state priorities.

Coordination

* In-Service Educational Resources – creating capacities at the local and regional levels for providng, on a continuous basis, the inservice training of school personnel in a manner which involves them in the planning for that training and focuses upon the problems they are confronting.
* Interagency Cooperation – providing high priority effort to coordinating the activities of schools with those of public and private agencies affecting children and families at the local and state levels (including coordination among school districts).
* Regional Service Offices – establishing centers which promote ready access to local, regional and state resources for assistance on local problems and on the implementation of state priorities.

Regulatory

* Legal – seeing that laws and regulations are understood and interpreted, and that channels for judicious review and appeal are available.
* Accounting – fulfilling mandated responsibilities for assuring that local, state and federal funds are expended properly and that mini-requirements are respected.

Perhpas the best summary of how this state role should be carried out, in my opinion, was described by New York Education Commissioner Ewald Nyquist in his eloquent eulogy to the late James E. Allen, Jr. presented at memorial services at Princeton University on December 13, 1971:

In his pursuit of quality and equality of educational opportunity, Allen made a unique contribution through masterful use of six basic tools. (1) the initiation of legislative change, (2) marshalling the power of the people through their voluntary organizations and involving people in the work of the Department, (3) exceptional relations with the press, (4) the exercise of the judicial powers of the Commissioner, (5) the administrative establishment of policies and programs, and (6) using the powers and prestige of the Board of Regents to establish positions on educational issues. In influencing the direction of change, he consistently adhered to the principle that the role of the State Education Department was to provide leadership, meaning trying to be the first to do something new and important, and doing the familiar as well as it could be done.

This, then, is a setting within which one can study the papers which follow. In introducing this publication to the reader, I have attempted to describe the origin and purposes of the papers. For the reader who is less familiar with the state role in education, I have briefly described what I believe to be pressures for strengthening this role, its expanding functions, and how these functions can be effectively performed. It is my hope that this will add to the usefulness of the publication for all those who peruse its pages.

Gregory R. Anrig
University of Massachusetts at Boston

Increased Interest In Early Education

Although early childhood education has a rich and lengthy history, only in the last ten years has there been substantial interest in this field among the general public. School begins at five or six for most youngsters and conventional wisdom holds that not much of academic significance occurs before that age. What little systematic attention was accorded the early years in previous periods focused mainly on physical and emotional aspects of growth rather than learning and mental development. Where group programs for young children did exist they tended to provide only custodial care for certain children or social and creative experiences for others.

All this has changed dramatically now, however, there is wide interest in language and intellectual development, the possible consequences of different early environments, patterns of child rearing, parent education programs, and many other matters related to profound social problems and important research efforts. Several factors have interacted to bring about this drastically altered state of affairs in the early education field.

Research

Both social action and research were stimulated by Bloom's very important summary of developmental studies from several fields.(1) Bloom concluded that human development can be most significantly influenced by environmental conditions during periods of rapid change in the characteristic under consideration, that is, in the case of height, for example, diet would be especially crucial in infancy and adolescence, the two periods of greatest growth. With respect to the educationally relevant areas of language and intelligence, Bloom's analysis indicated that school came too late to have maximum influence, the most plastic period having come to a close by age four.

Bloom's conclusions, sometimes not completely understood, were seized upon by social activists and others interested in showing that children from poverty backgrounds could be best helped toward school success by early intervention programs such as Head Start. Later remedial efforts, it was argued, would have to be proportionately much greater and more expensive and would still be unlikely to produce the results possible with preschool stimulation projects.

Another highly influential book was Hunt's *Intelligence And Experience*, in which he sought to analyze research evidence and theories bearing on the nature of human intellectual development.(5) Hunt presented a scientific basis for arguing that an enriched early environment which provided a wide range of potential learning experiences was essential for optimal mental growth. Such a position contrasted sharply with earlier ones which held that parents, in order to be assured of proper development for their child, need only concern themselves with the provision of secure and hygenic surroundings. This message was significant for the general poupulation as well as those sectors committed to assisting children from deprived backgrounds.

While Bloom and Hunt were raising these important questions, many scholars and practitioners interested in education and psychology became increasingly influenced by the work of the Swiss investigator, Jean Piaget. Piaget, who over a period of forty years has formulated a complete theory of human intellectual development, stresses the importance of active involvement of the organism in constructing its own explanation of environmental events. Here were additional grounds for believing that there might be ways to influence human growth in beneficial directions. Moreover, Piaget's theory and associated extensive work with children seemed to provide some clues as to how an educational sequence might be so structured as to follow rather closely the natural trends in the growth of the child mind.(6)

To some extent because of interest in Piaget-related work but also as a result of concern with social problems related to child rearing, by the mid-1960s substantial research attention began to focus on infants and toddlers in the first three years of life. Such work appeared needed in view of evidence that even three-year-olds differed substantially among themselves in their general approach to life and strategies for dealing with problems. Several research groups began systematic efforts to determine the degree to which these behavioral characteristics were established through interaction with adults and, therefore, subject to modification.

Head Start and Other Compensatory Programs

Easily the most popular component of the War on Poverty was Head Start, the preschool project designed to help young disadvantaged children overcome handicapping conditions considered likely to inhibit school success. Hundreds of thousands of children have attended summer and year-long classes offered under this program.

Many benefits have been derived from Head Start and similar ventures, but there is little justification for claiming that the original intent of guaranteeing school success for all poverty level children has been realized. It may well be, however, that this lack of fulfillment of expectations is leading to work of greater ultimate significance than that undertaken initially. The fact that studies of children younger than Head-Start age developed from a recognition that even three year olds required earlier help has already been mentioned. And support for programs to follow Head Start in the school derived from a concern that the educational system would have to be modified in fundamental ways if gains made in preschool classes were to be capitalized upon. These various modifications are now being considered as possible ways to offer all children optimal learning environments in place of the routines of the traditional school.

Although compensatory preschool education was designed for disadvantaged youngsters, these projects have been instrumental in sensitizing all levels of society to the possibilities inherent in early instruction. Television's *Sesame Street*, for example, is not only watched by many children from a wide variety of backgrounds but has also increased adult interest in learning experiences for the very young.

Public Attention to Education

With the growing significance of the economic and social decisions involved activities at all levels of the educational enterprise have come under close examination. The daily media convey much material related to school matters, locally and nationally, and several best-selling books have discussed the problems of education or youth. These factors both reflect increased attention to schools and contribute to it.

In this context early childhood may be viewed as the most rapidly developing area of education. New institutions, ranging from research centers to neighborhood nursery schools, are being established every day. Fully developed, articulated plans for assuring optimal growth of infants and young children are put forth regularly by individuals and groups. Educational materials and products have been marketed at an increasing volume, indicating substantial consumer interest. Colleges announce with growing frequency the inauguration or expansion of programs designed to prepare staff in early education. A substantial number of professional and popular books related to young children have been published recently.

The range and extent of this activity clearly indicate the presence of a substantial trend toward acceptance of the principle that education in some organized form ought to begin quite early in the child's life, certainly before the traditional age of school entrance.

Day-Care Services

Very recently there has developed a significant movement which seeks the establish-

ment of easily available daily child-care facilities outside the home The sources of this demand vary, encompassing all income levels and localities There can be no doubt of the potential in this field. U S Government figures indicate that over four million working mothers have children less than six years of age (7)

For many families the day-care question is tied to finances in a very direct way The standard of living aspired to by most young couples requires that the wives be employed, both before and after the arrival of children. In the case of a high proportion of low-income households the mother is often the chief or only wage-earner, a situation which means that arrangements must be made for small children during the day and for others before and after school Most job-training and other instructional programs for disadvantaged adult women require that their children be cared for during the period of training, something frequently done in centers affiliated with the institutions in which the trainees are enrolled. But this group of mothers often finds no such service available when they leave the project and enter actual employment.

Even when there is no economic necessity for a mother to work the issue remains as a social and political one. Many citizens, men and women, believe that mothers who wish to be employed as a matter of preference should have that opportunity without any difficulty being presented in the way of the absence of responsible day-care service.

All who have examined the question of day care agree that centers should not only provide well for the physical and emotional needs of children but should also establish a setting and an operational system which guarantee optimal educational conditions. In practical terms such a goal means that a quality day-care facility would incorporate nursery schools for three-to-five groups and special environments and experiences for infants and toddlers. If older children are served, other resources should be provided for the hours when they are in attendance

Early Education Programs And Projects

The nursery school has been the principal, if not exclusive, early education facility for some time but is now being joined by agencies working with both younger and older children Some under-threes are served by group programs and others are visited regularly in their homes. A significant number of kindergarten and primary-grade students attend classes which have been influenced by one of several trends in the field of early education.

Infants and parents

The often-stated belief that parents are children's most important teachers now has a body of research evidence as well as natural wisdom supporting it Several investigators have conducted studies which demonstrate rather conclusively that parents, especially mothers, differ substantially in how they interact with their infants and that these differences have observable consequences in the behavior of the children

Hess and his associates have found, for example, systematic variation in how they help their children solve certain problems among groups of mothers from various income and social backgrounds. In general, lower-class mothers involved in these studies appeared to take a highly negative approach in their teaching, doing little in the way of explaining and encouraging while making many negative comments and issuing brief commands. (4)

Other investigators have found that mothers of children identified as successful in meeting life problems at the age of three engage in highly similar childrearing practices. they provide an interesting environment and allow the child to explore it rather completely, concerning themselves only with the safety of the baby and some of their

most prized possessions. In this setting the child *learns* much on his own and also receives some instruction from the mother. The result is a youngster who knows how to gain information from his environment, process it, and use it to deal with situations he confronts.

Since it is possible to define to some extent what *good* mothers do, several types of projects aimed at the improvement of parents' teaching skills have been designed and implemented. Gordon, in rural Florida, has conducted an extensive program involving the preparation of indigenous leadership people who go from home to home assisting mothers in establishing child-educating procedures of their own. Neighborhood play groups, organized in someone's yard, serve as centers for parent education (3). Similar *Home Start* efforts operate under the sponsorship of various agencies.

At the national level Parent Child Centers which provide health and social as well as educational services have been established in response to concern that Head Start began too late to be really effective in alleviating handicapping conditions affecting the disadvantaged child or the entire family.

Organized Group Programs

Developmental Nursery Schools

The conventional nursery school sponsored by a community agency, administered by a college, or operated by a private party for profit, is the most widely available early education facility.

Whatever their origin or management, nursery schools tend to be highly similar in their operation. They are usually overseen by a head teacher with specialized preparation in child development or early education. This person will be assisted by others who may or may not have had specific preparation for their responsibilities. If the school is of the cooperative type, those assisting will often be parents helping one day at a time on a rotating basis.

The typical well maintained nursery school will have a variety of learning areas available to the children, a playhouse corner, an area for building with large blocks, easels in a special place for painting, manipulative toys, clay and other materials to be used at tables, and such additional possibilities as book corners, large riding and rocking toys, water and sand tables, climbing apparatus, and outside playgrounds.

The daily schedule of the usual nursery school is made up of alternating individual and group activities, quiet and active periods, and directed or non-directed experiences. Normally a major portion of a half-day program will be given over to a very important individual-choice period during which children are encouraged to choose among activities available in the various areas of the room. The role of adults is crucial at this time as they can make the experiences much more valuable by circulating among the students, asking questions, restructuring activities, offering suggestions, assisting, listening, and in many ways augmenting the learning which is taking place all around them. (It will be noted that this pattern of adult behavior corresponds to that attributed to the *good mother* role identified in homes which produce the better-performing infants.) A person following such a pattern — it is also found in the better kindergartens — does not ignore the children, but neither does she constantly interfere with their chosen activities or attempt to be the sole center of attention.

Much high-quality learning goes on in a well-operated nursery class. Children develop motor and perceptual skills by manipulating form boards, for example, they learn concepts as they build with blocks, play in water, and care for plants and animals. Language is enhanced through such activities as discussion and story-telling and dress-up dramatic play, large-muscle abilities are gained through practice in climbing, hopping, and tricycle riding.

But the principal goal in nursery education has been social and emotional development. The good home provides most of the other opportunities painting, books, riding toys, puzzles, clay and all the rest. Most parents who enroll their child in nursery school seek not these experiences but rather the context in which they occur: the group setting. Three- and four-year-olds are placed in nursery schools so that they will have opportunities to leave the home regularly, be to that extent independent of the family, and interact with other children. Parents want their young child to begin the process of discovering that, just as there are persons who deserve respect, there are many other people in the world who will react to them individually but not as a beloved member of the same family. Americans value independence combined with the ability to get along well with others and the developmental nursery school promotes these same goals.

In addition to this traditional nursery school, there exists one other type with a rather long history and some degree of acceptance, the program devised by Maria Montessori on the basis of her careful assessment of children's developmental needs. Although there is much variation among the schools labeled *Montessori*, and many so designated closely resemble the typical nursery class, the institutions following this approach tend to de-emphasize group experiences and creative work in favor of individual activities with specialized equipment and materials designed to promote specific learnings graded in difficulty. Advocates of this approach contend that such a program, combined with certain genuine rather than make-believe housekeeping tasks, provides an optimal developmental environment. They insist that social-emotional needs are not ignored, since the child learns that he is a worthwhile person who can solve problems of many different sorts. Some nursery school teachers following the conventional approach agree that the Montessori materials may be valuable but include these among the usual ones rather than insist that they be used more or less exclusively and according to precise teacher-given directions.

Follow-Through Models

Project Head Start was conceived of as a likely means of inoculating disadvantaged children against school failure. Advocates argued that many children of poverty lacked the quality of general care and educative opportunities provided in more affluent and cultured homes. Since middle-class children do very well in school and the nursery class duplicates many of the experiences they have at home, it seemed reasonable that Head Start should follow the pattern of the developmental nursery school. Disadvantaged children would thus, or so it seemed, have their backgrounds compensated for in ways which would help them prepare for formal instruction.

Almost from the beginning various individuals and groups disagreed with this analysis. Because traditional nursery school goals emphasized social and emotional growth, uninformed individuals leaped to the conclusion that in such an approach there would be little or no attention to much needed cognitive and language skills. Many early childhood educators, having worked exclusively with youngsters who already possessed superior mental and linguistic skills when they came to school, failed to grasp the significance of the questions being raised and insisted that no one needed to be terribly concerned, children did not require instruction in such natural traits as thinking and speaking. Head Start staff members confronted with non-talking four-year-olds were not so sure.

Even those who accepted Head Start as a proper sort of program expressed doubts that one year, or even two, of preschool education would prepare disadvantaged youngsters for the traditional school, a place where their older brothers and sisters had so often encountered failure and bitter disappointment. These critics pointed out that any gains children made in Head Start soon disappeared when they went on the larger classes and

rigid procedures of the primary grades or even kindergarten. Their position was that what needed changing was the school system, not the child.

In answer to these criticisms government agencies responsible for Head Start and related projects announced that funds for Follow Through classes to carry Head Start children on into kindergarten and the primary grades would be granted only to school systems agreeing to modify their classes in one of several definitive ways, the precise model selected to be a matter determined by the school district. Several "Follow Through Models" were identified and descriptions of them made available to interested school systems. In some cases the models were adopted by Head Start and public-school compensatory preschool projects, in which case the term *Planned Variation* was employed.

Although including common elements such as provision of medical and social services and the requirement of significant involvement of parents in the decision-making process, the models range widely in their degree of departure from the traditional approach, representing several different theoretical positions and research efforts. School systems following the various models are cooperating in a major investigation designed to lead to a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

The list of models is not static, but several have been in use since the initiation of the project. An examination of the more prominent ones provides an overview of much of the work going on in early education at the present time. It is reasonable to anticipate that various of these approaches will be made available to day care centers for possible adoption as their educational component. All of the model programs have multiple objectives and each has been designed to help children. The grouping used here is intended as an aid to discussion.* (The Florida parent education program discussed in a preceding section is also an available model.)

Teaching School-Related Skills

Several Follow Through models give primary attention to preparing children for conventional school and assisting them to succeed in that environment. Most widely discussed of these is the *Academically Oriented* approach originally formulated as the Bereiter-Engelmann plan for disadvantaged preschool children. The basic argument for this strategy is that many poverty-level youngsters lag so far behind their middle-class age mates when they come to school that the conventional nursery or kindergarten programs with their relatively less directed procedures simply cannot help such children make up their deficit in the time available. Rather, they must receive intensive direct instruction aimed at the achievement of a limited set of undeniably important objectives. From preschool through the primary grades lessons are sequenced and presented in a rather rigidly prescribed manner to small groups. The basic skills of language, number and reading are all treated in a similar fashion.

The *Behavioral Analysis* model also stresses the designation of limited objectives, but the approach has most to do with perfecting procedures to be employed in achieving whatever goals are set. In the better known behavior modification projects, however, the objectives have been traditional-school oriented, including such matters as speaking only with permission, following directions, and using materials in specified ways. The model emphasizes that those involved in a program should know how to spell out precisely what they would like a child to be able to do and then be willing to devote careful attention to seeing that the conditions of the situation are modified so that the likelihood of the desired behavior taking place increases toward surety. Various rewards and inducements,

*A good general reference for Follow-Through models is Maccoby and Zellner, EXPERIMENTS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: ASPECTS OF PROJECT FOLLOW THROUGH, Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1970.

everything from candy to favorable adult comments, are offered to children to gain the desired ends Unproductive or otherwise inappropriate responses are ignored or, sometimes, punished in a mild way Projects following this model must give serious attention to staff training, as most adults find it difficult to follow the necessary procedures.

Other school-oriented models advocate careful step-by-step programming of a child's experiences so that he gradually learns what is presented and gains confidence through continued success. Such a system may be presented by means of an electronic device of some sort

Changing the School

Rather than rendering traditional approaches more efficient, some model developers have stressed the need to abandon the usual style of classroom teaching. The *Educational Development Center* approach, borrowed principally from the British infant school movement, places the child rather than the teacher at the center of the learning process The teacher creates an interesting classroom situation for children and then circulates among them, conferring with individuals, structuring learning activities, posing and answering questions, encouraging best efforts, teaching directly at appropriate points, and in many ways responding to students' needs

Both the *Responsive Environment* and *Tucson Early Education* Follow Through models also emphasize the establishment of an interesting classroom in which many potentially valuable experiences are possible and where the child has some choice. These and the EDC strategy represent, when they are carried into the primary grades, a substantial departure from the conventional school practices of teacher-centered organization, textbook-dominated lessons, and required child poasivity. Advocates of these models argue that only a small proportion of children can succeed at the narrow range of learning activities presented by the traditional school. If all children are to find learning possible and enjoyable, the educational system must stress many ways of knowing, not just a few, and focus on the individual student, not the total group. It is interesting to note that, when the role of the teacher in these model programs is discussed, the description bears a strong resemblance to those of both the competent developmental nursery-school teacher and the mother of an infant judged to be *successful* in problem solving.

Fostering Normal Development

Two models given special attention to the process of studying the natural trends in child development in order to better understand how the school may support these. In the *Bank Street* approach emotional development receives equal attention with academic and intellectual performance. The position taken is that the various aspects interrelate to such a degree that the emotional cannot be ignored. Only if the child feels loved and accepted will he make optimal school progress Teachers should conduct themselves and their programs in ways that will lead children to trust them

The *Cognitively Oriented* program is based on the work of Piaget, who has provided a rather thorough description of how the child's mind develops. This cognitive strategy stresses the value of providing a rich environment with which the child interacts and as a result formulates an explanation of the world around him. The task of the teacher is to understand the stages of mental growth so that she can determine from his actions what a valuable next experience for the child might be. The intention is not to accelerate mental development, since this is possible only in superficial ways, but to insure its stability and continuance.

Planning Considerations

Head Start and Follow Through projects are being studied carefully in the expectation that each, in addition to assisting children in a general sort of way, will yield results different in kind or degree from other models. Such information would obviously be of use to those seeking solutions to particular problems having to do with the establishment of school curricula, day care centers, and other educational services.

Investigations related to prenatal care, infant learning, and mother-child interaction are also being carried out, and there is much to be learned in these largely neglected fields. Program developers and policy-making bodies now have little in the way of reliable information on which to base decisions. But, in the absence of proven knowledge, choices must be made and services rendered. It seems important to specify the important considerations which bear on these decisions.

Increased Options

Rather than wait and hope for complete answers to all questions, those concerned with establishing means to facilitate the early development of the child would be better advised to encourage a wide diversity of activities which can be monitored and expanded, altered, or terminated as results become apparent. The problems encountered are so complex that conflicting points may be easily identified.

For one important example, it is generally accepted that the child under three years of age will be highly vulnerable to emotional difficulties growing out of lack of a close and continuing warm relationship with a mother or someone fulfilling that role. This generalization would appear to mean that group care for infants and toddlers ought to be thought of as questionable or even inadvisable. On the other hand, there is ample evidence from the incidence of child abuse and knowledge of the gross deficiencies of many homes that not all children enjoy the warm nurturing climate required for optimal development. Group care, in such circumstances, could not cause further harm and might well be of significant help.

In this same area Caldwell has completed a rather careful study which indicates that, in a well-run program, infants may be separated from their mothers for a few hours per day without there being any deleterious effects. (Caldwell, 1972) A further consideration, however, is that a center operating at a standard comparable to the one investigated would be quite expensive to maintain.

In the case of the mother who needs assistance but wants to or must keep her child at home, a variety of potentially useful services may be considered, and some exemplary work is now in progress. Neighborhood play centers or baby clinics can serve as information and training locations with a staff to provide expert advice. Specialists can visit families regularly to answer questions and make suggestions. Comprehensive plans may evolve as the mother is encouraged to play with and stimulate the baby, learns to structure educative experiences as it grows older, and enrolls him in a day care center or nursery school.

Children from stable family situations should not be ignored. Their parents have always been among those most interested in providing an optimal environment for growth and would be the first to take advantage of child-rearing advice and services. Many of these mothers do so well in providing the child with a sense of trust and a positive outlook on life that he can go into a high-quality group care situation and derive much benefit from it.

Parent Involvement

Efforts to facilitate child growth and development must begin at an early age and in-

clude parents In such areas as health and nutrition, work with families must begin during the prenatal period or even before Most public health efforts have long been restricted to basic physical care, however, with, perhaps, some attention to emotional difficulties Even in the best of circumstances, systematic contact with professional infant-care advisors terminates soon after delivery

Knowledge about early development would seem to warrant greater attention to making parents more effective in their roles, beginning during the first few months of the infant's life. An appropriate program would be carried out in such a way as to support parents and enhance their status, not undermine them, and thus strengthen families, not weaken them. Facilitating personnel would need to be flexible enough to maximize the beneficial influences within a particular home rather than insist on major and therefore unlikely, revisions in life style. Any improvement in parents' performance would be of manifold importance, as there would be a high probability of making them more effective with any subsequent offspring.

Parent involvement is now mandated in all Federally-financed programs for children, and a few projects have been successful in establishing good relations with parents and bringing them into the decision-making process. The number of such success stories is notable by its small magnitude, however. In addition to the many practical problems of designating a satisfactory time for meetings and supplying transportation, there is the very serious matter that most poverty-background people are suspect toward institutions, including schools. Such parents desperately want a better life for their children and most know that the educational system could help in important ways. Their experiences with the system are mainly unfortunate [illegible] d they feel powerless to make it work for them.

But when treated with respect and shown how they may make an important contribution to their child's education, parents express interest in participating The ways in which that interest is nurtured, expanded, and channeled will likely have an important influence on the child's development and the parent's attitude toward his own life situation.

Involvement of parents carries with it a threat as well as a promise Many adults have very rigid and repressive attitudes concerning education and child-rearing practices. Given full authority over a class, many parent groups would advocate the most authoritarian sorts of practices in order to produce obedient and well trained children. Authorities advocating humane and child-oriented ways of working often find it difficult to convince parents that what may look like a common-sense way of doing things actually harms children. Parent involvement must be interwoven with parent education to realize the benefits from each.

Quality Control

In the case of an area expanding as rapidly as early care and education, there will be problems of maintaining standards of performance Indeed, there have been so few programs in this field that no widely accepted set of standards exists. But, given the vulnerability of young children and their powerlessness to protect themselves, extreme care must be taken to see that unfortunate occurrences are guarded against

Certainly the idea that traditional school should simply start a year or two earlier is repugnant to many (10) The caution is expressed that the educational system has for good reason come under severe criticism for its sometimes callous treatment of children Some critics are unwilling to see a school which has failed to deal with its current students as worthwhile human beings being given similar authority over younger ones.

Additionally, a few authorities argue that a quality day care operation, complete with

an appropriate number of trained staff, a full range of health and social services, adequate supplies and equipment, and an effective educational component, would be so expensive as to make even non-profit status unattainable without large subsidies. This position raises serious questions about the likelihood of day care as a business enterprise.

Those charged with the responsibility of overseeing the approval of programs for young children must surely look beyond such superficial matters as physical facilities and paper qualifications of staff to the nature of the situation actually provided for children and the quality of services available. This may well be an instance where something is sometimes worse than nothing.

Staff Preparation

With the expansion of child care and early education opportunities there have arisen serious questions concerning the selection and preparation of staff. It is clearly foolish to say that the early months and years of a child's life are crucially important but that it does not require any special expertise to fill the role of care giver. That is an attitude reflected in arguments favoring the establishment of day care centers on the grounds that employment possibilities for unskilled women will be thereby created.

The matter of deciding what categories of personnel might work with infants and young children under given conditions is a complex one that should be examined carefully. In the discussion of parent involvement it was pointed out that many adults have rather narrow views concerning what is best for children. When they are parents and thus have some rights to deal with their own child as they see fit, few would contend that the larger society should intervene except in serious circumstances. But when other people's children are being served and a responsible institution is involved, the adult who has been retained to work with youngsters cannot be given absolute authority to act in any way that he or she sees fit.

It seems apparent, then, that the average person off the street should not be judged ready to help children. Steps must be taken to provide on-the-job education as well as systematic formal learning experiences for them. The precise nature of these preparation programs is a matter for discussion among groups composed of professionals from various fields and interested private citizens.

Administrative Responsibility.

Many institutions have some degree of responsibility for either the pregnant woman, the infant, the young child, the distressed family, the adolescent on the brink of parenthood, or the day care worker in need of formal education. But not one of these agencies, whether clinic or hospital, welfare department, day care center, school or university, has the sort of record to recommend it as the sole dispenser of the services now seemingly called for. And not only does no single class of institution have a good reputation for its own qualities of efficiency and responsiveness, but no two have an acceptable record of cooperation with each other. Unfortunately, it is axiomatic that among public services there are gaps, duplications, competition, confusion, jealousy and waste.

In addition to the problem of agencies attending to only one or two aspects of child development and guarding their prerogatives, there is the difficulty arising out of their concern with a single chronological sector of life. The trap of seeing the period before birth as separate from infancy and that as distinct from early childhood must be avoided. In essence, continuity of life experience is what the current early education movement is all about. Its promise cannot be realized without significant change in how institutions operate.

Attempts to promote cooperation among agencies at both state and local levels have been made through 4-C *(Community Coordinated Child Care)* Councils which bring

together representatives of the relevant agencies These groups undertake a variety of functions – from gathering information and advocating policies to establishing guidelines and coordinating staff training efforts.(9) Such work appears promising, but it depends on individuals and groups surrendering some of their autonomy, an act which may be foreign to their natures. Policy makers at all levels, however much they may respect the expertise and commitment embodied in various institutions, should be careful to build into programs the sorts of safeguards which will insure that children and families are assisted within the most comprehensive framework possible.

Value Judgements

Discussions of infant stimulation and early education do not proceed very far before questions of value intervene. Matters which go directly to the crucial points are apparent to many. What are the relative rights of society and the individual parent? What sorts of citizens do we want to produce? What authority does one sector of the population have to plan for others? Who will protect the rights of defenseless children?

As Siegel has pointed out, much of this sort of discussion will have to become quite explicit if understanding adequate to the task is to be achieved (11) In the history of early education decisions have been made on the basis of needs and concerns of adults. If the diversity of children's requirements are truly recognized and a commitment made to meet them, mass projects identical in detail no matter who is being served will have to be forgone in favor of a more client-centered orientation.

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